

THE BUSINESS BAROMETER.

An Index to the Condition of Trade Generally.

AN ENLARGED DEMAND FOR GOODS.

Gradual Improvement in Orders from the Interior—Cotton Seed Oil Weak—Trade Notes.

Office of The Post,

Houston, Thursday, March 11.

Local trade is in a very healthy condition, and some large shipments have been made from Houston this week. There is a general feeling that improvement in nearly all lines will be realized soon, and country buyers are beginning to order more freely. Among retailers a very good trade has been noticeable this month, the early opening of spring causing an enlarged demand for seasonal goods in every line. In the wholesale market there is much activity in hardware, groceries, drugs, machinery and building material.

The many improvements being made and contemplated in Houston this year will be a big incentive to business in itself. Not only will this increase in building cause a big demand for every class of material, but it will give employment to hundreds of idle men and thus place a large amount of money in circulation.

Another favorable feature in the general trade outlook is the prospect for bountiful crops. It is, of course, too early for a good yield to be measured in either the grain, cotton or fruit crop, but it is quite evident that man's preparations have been on a larger scale than ever before. With an average season from this time on the harvest in this State will gladden the heart of every man and quicken the pulse of trade in all lines of business.

Sea Island Cotton.

The production of Sea Island cotton in Texas that season was the largest ever known, but the coming poor promises to show a big falling off in the acreage. Planters are rather disgusted with the returns on the crop this year, and many of them have concluded to stick to the ordinary cotton, which can be cultivated, picked and ginned at less expense and is always sure of a market.

There is no doubt that South Texas lands are well adapted to the raising of the long staple cotton, and many farmers in the coast country make money on their Sea Island crops in part years. This season, however, it has been difficult to find a market for the class of cotton and prices have been much lower than usual. An accumulation of Galveston of local cotton was sold last Monday at an average of \$1.00 per bushel, up to 100 bushels and with discounts, and the market remained open on the place of supply, etc.

The average price paid for Sea Island cotton in Houston last year was the pound. This year it has ranged from 10 to 12.

COTTON SEED OIL.

Texas oil mills have nearly all closed down for the season and many of them have disposed of their entire stocks. Some mills are still holding for higher prices, however, and believe that the advance in land, if continued, will result in higher prices for crude oils. It is not said that stocks in the Mississippi Valley section are fully large.

The Williams & Flinch company of New York says that the cotton oil market has been affected by the fact that not only the French market, our most important outlet of late, has been discontinued by their absence, but in one or two instances they have failed to respond to the calls for cotton oil.

The Williams & Flinch company has once again, however, been compelled to sell and will doubtless continue to do so until a market is found for the surplus oil.

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South Texas Strawberries.

The first strawberries received in Houston since the February freeze were on the market. The Houston Produce and Canning Company has half cases packages from Los Angeles City and three half cases from Avila. The last crop brought in 25 and the first from the San Joaquin Canning Company also came in a case from Avila, for which it was observed. Of course, a fancy price can hardly be regarded as just, but the market is in a very bad condition.

Onions—Cotton No. 1, \$1.00 per bushel.

ONION SETS—15¢ per lb.

POTATOES—Cheese Colorado and Calif. Red—Sweet potatoes begin to appear.

PEAS—Tennessee Triumph No. 1, 15¢ per lb. No. 2, 13¢ per lb. New York—No. 1, 15¢ per lb. No. 2, 13¢ per lb.

POTATOES—Large onions, 15¢ per lb.

POTATOES—Cheese Colorado and Calif. Red—Sweet potatoes begin to appear.

PEAS—Tennessee Triumph No. 1, 15¢ per lb. No. 2, 13¢ per lb.

PEAS—Evaporated, unpeeled, 82¢ per lb.

PEAS—Evaporated, 64¢ per lb.

PEAS—Evaporated, 56¢ per lb.

RAISINS—California L. L. boxes, 10¢ per lb.

RAISINS—California